

An Overview of Ayurveda - All About Ayurveda

[Ayurveda](#) is one of the oldest systems of traditional medicine still being practised. It is a system of holistic health and aims at a combination of diet, medicine and life style changes to bring the body and soul in harmony.

What is Ayurveda?

Ayurveda is derived from two Sanskrit words: "Veda" meaning knowledge and "Ayush" meaning long life. According to the basic tenets of Ayurveda, human life can be prolonged and health improved by following a holistic lifestyle. According to Ayurveda, prevention of disease is more important than its cure.

History of Ayurveda

The science of Ayurveda is one of the oldest healing sciences that originating in India around 5000 thousand years ago. The belief widely held in India is that the science of healing came about as a divine revelation to Acharya Veda Vyas, who, who put the basic philosophy of Ayurveda in a set of religious books called as the Vedas. Significantly, the knowledge contained in the Vedas was taken as true, there have been no instances of testing or experimentation in the treatise.

There were many significant contributors to this body of knowledge over the next 2000 years. Among them was Acharya Charaka, who, in his experience, the Charaka Samhita dated 3 B.C elucidated on immunity, metabolism and digestion. Acharya Sushruta has recorded instances of surgery on the skull in his treatise, Sushruta Samhita.

With the growth of Hinduism, sages and seers transcribed oral traditions into book form. Ayurveda grew to encompass use of herbs, colours, foods, aromas, gems, slokas and mantras and even surgery. The Atharva Veda delineated Ayurveda into eight branches and gradually, Ayurveda grew into two schools of medicine:

1. Atreya School for Physicians
2. Dhanvantari School for Surgeons

Spread of Ayurveda in history

Over the next 1000 years, learners from all over the world came to India to learn about Ayurveda and the spiritual scripts it was recorded in. Travellers from Tibet, China, Greece, Rome and Persia learnt about Ayurveda and took their knowledge of healing back to their countries. Chinese and Unani traditional schools of medicine have their roots in Ayurveda.

Tenets of Ayurveda

Ayurveda is a science which takes into account a person's lifestyle, metabolism and environment to come up with preventive and curative measures. Each person is a combination of the three principal energies known as Doshas: Kapha, Vata and Pitta.

One of these energies will be predominant in each person and accordingly the diet, medicine and activity plan would be formulated by the Ayurvedic practitioner to bring the patient's mind and body in harmony.

The physiological make up and food habits of each person would tend to be Tamsik, Rajsik or Sattvik. Ayurveda is a spiritual science and practices like cleansing, chanting and meditation are prescribed as part of a holistic lifestyle.

[Learn more basics of ayurveda medicine](#)